

Equality and Diversity in SLSA Conferences

The Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) is committed to equality, values diversity, and seeks to promote an open, inclusive and socially representative professional association and scholarly community. The Association believes that the promotion of equality and diversity should be core values in the advancement of research, teaching and the dissemination of knowledge in the field of socio-legal studies.

As set out in the SLSA Equality and Diversity Policy Document, the SLSA is committed to opposing discrimination and to striving for equality and diversity within the discipline, on the basis of gender, sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, race, nationality, age, religion, disability, mental health status, marital status, family responsibility, and class. It aims in its policies, processes and governance, to achieve inclusion and to aspire towards diversity in demographic, geographical, scholarly, and institutional terms.

An important part of the work undertaken by the SLSA, is the provision of opportunities for socio-legal scholars to promote and disseminate socio-legal research, and to support socio-legal researchers, scholars and teachers to collaborate and produce innovative new approaches that advance the frontiers of the discipline as a whole. The SLSA recognises that an important part of providing this support is to also facilitate a culture of diversity and inclusion within the discipline. To this effect, this document sets out specific guidance for implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy aimed at:

- Conference Organisers
- Stream Convenors
- Delegates

This guidance should be followed in relation to SLSA events such as the SLSA Annual Conference, The SLSA Postgraduate Conference, and any sponsored or co-sponsored events which receive specific financial support from the Association.

Guidance for Conference Organisers

The SLSA requires conference organisers to have due regard to the different characteristics, circumstances and positions of those working within the discipline of socio-legal studies, and to promote and support the equal participation of those attending or seeking to attend SLSA conferences and events.

For instance, the SLSA is appreciative of the ways in which those working within the discipline are also characterised by institutional and economic precarity.

- As a result, specific attention should be paid to the potential barriers to attendance or participation in these events which may be faced by particular groups, and how these may be avoided or ameliorated.

- One part of these efforts is the ongoing commitment of the SLSA to providing financial support where possible to particular groups such as Postgraduate Members and not-for-profit organisations. However, organisers should also seek wherever possible to promote the availability of bursaries to these and other groups, and these will be competitive factors in applications for institutions seeking to host future conferences.
- Conference organisers are also expected to interpret these inclusive efforts more broadly, so as to ensure that these events are promoted accessibly to a range of different audiences, such as through social media as well as within the SLSA membership database.

Further, specific attention should also be paid to the ways that conferences can be organised in ways that facilitate diversity and inclusion within these events. This should include, at a minimum, paying thought to the following:

- The way in which particular demographics, such as (but not limited to) gender identity, nationality and race, and disabilities (broadly defined) are represented in plenary or speaker invitations.
- The accessibility of these events more broadly for a diverse range of audiences. Conference organisers should be open to the wide range of adjustments that people may require to attend or speak at conferences, and make their willingness to accommodate adjustments clear from the outset, to ensure no potential delegates are deterred from participation due to concerns about the potential barriers they may encounter. Such adjustments could include, for example, the accommodations for those who may require seating during breaks, quiet spaces across the venue, AV equipment, admittance of personal assistants, or the provision of childcare facilities.
- The potential impact of scheduling arrangements, such as several parallel sessions, on the attendance at sessions involving early career and doctoral colleagues, or colleagues who may have more limited opportunities to attend the entire conference.

Guidance for Stream Convenors

The SLSA also requires stream convenors to have due regard to ensure that conferences involving streams are geared towards promoting and supporting the equal participation of those attending and participating in streams.

This will involve paying specific attention to the ways that streams can be organised, scheduled and facilitated in order to promote and support diversity and inclusion within streams. This should include, at a minimum, paying attention to the following:

- Scheduling of panels within the stream: the way in which particular demographics, such as (but not limited to) gender identity, nationality, race, and disability are represented in the composition of panels.
- The potential impact of scheduling sessions involving early career or postgraduate colleagues alongside other major conference events or panels, which may detract attendance from these sessions.
- The fact that individual participants may need adjustments to enable them to participate in a session, such as the prior provision of documents in large type, live captioning during presentations, or the option to take questions in particular ways.

In particular, stream convenors should also take specific steps to ensure that sessions are chaired in a way that promotes and supports the equal participation of those working within the discipline.

- For example, this may involve actively seeking contributions from early career or doctoral colleagues in the way of chairing sessions or asking questions during sessions, or taking particular steps to enable the active participation of disabled colleagues, such as allowing additional time.
- Chairs should also be prepared to intervene in order to minimise contributions which are not constructive, are inappropriate, or take up unnecessary time during questions.

Guidance for Delegates

The SLSA requires delegates attending conferences and events to have due regard to the different characteristics, circumstances and positions of those working within the discipline of socio-legal studies.

For instance, the SLSA requires delegates to consider their own role in promoting and supporting the equal participation of those attending SLSA conferences and events. Delegates are expected to follow the following examples of 'best practice'

- When chairing sessions: to take proactive steps to support the equal participation of other delegates, such as by actively seeking contributions from early career or doctoral colleagues in the chairing of sessions or asking questions during sessions, or allowing additional time for any colleagues that may require it. Chairs should also be prepared to intervene in order to minimise contributions which are not constructive, are inappropriate, or take up unnecessary time during questions.

- When presenting papers and posters: to consider the accessibility needs of other delegates, such as by using appropriate font sizes and background colours, and to keep to allotted timings in order to avoid impinging on the opportunities of others to contribute.
- When asking questions: to ensure that questions are always framed constructively, do not take up unnecessary time that would prevent others from participating in discussions, and posed in ways which avoid behaviours that may have exclusionary or degrading effects for particular groups.